

## Basic Foundations Training for Advocates



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## WHO CAN APPLY?

- The applicant
- Any adult member of the family
- Authorized representative
- Agency acting on the client's behalf



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## HOW TO APPLY?

- Obtain an application package
  - \* IN-PERSON
  - \* TELEPHONE
  - \* BY MAIL
  - \* ONLINE (SNAP and HEAP)
- Every DSS Center accepts applications for all TA, SNAP & MA programs



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## My benefits.gov

- Suffolk County accepts electronic SNAP and HEAP applications/recertifications online through the website:

[mybenefits.ny.gov](http://mybenefits.ny.gov)



## Mybenefits.ny.gov



## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO APPLY?

### THREE ZIP CODE LISTS

1. Temporary Assistance & SNAP
2. Medicaid
3. Fuel Sites

All Lists are included in the DSS Directory

## SUFFOLK COUNTY WEBSITE

<http://suffolkcountyny.gov/departments/socialservices>.

The DSS homepage has the most recent Directory for Public Access to Social Service Program which includes the zip code lists.

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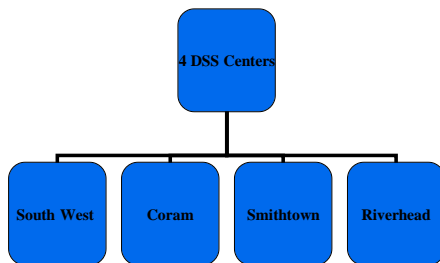
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## WHERE ARE THE CENTERS?



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## What to Expect at the DSS Ctr

### • **Expect to Wait**

- \* Bring a book, drink or a snack.
- \* Applications are reviewed and handed out to examiners in the order they are received.
- \* Some intakes take longer than others.
- \* Someone may be called in before you even if you arrived first for many different reasons.



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## What to Expect at the DSS Ctr

- Applications are available in the lobby, however, it's best to have your application completed before your arrival at the Center.
- The TA/SNAP packages contain many forms besides the "common application".
- The State booklets in these packages are a good way for clients to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities.

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## Read the booklets

- The state booklets provided in the application package provide a lot of valuable information:
    - \* **BOOK 1 – LDSS 4148 -Blue Book**
- "What you should know about Social Services Programs"
- \* Application Rights
  - \* Personal Privacy Rights
  - \* Conferences and Fair Hearings
  - \* Your Responsibilities
  - \* Intentional Program Violation (IPV)



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## Read the booklets

- \* **BOOK 2 – LDSS 4148 - Purple Book**

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

- \* What kinds of expense will TA help me pay?
- \* Can I get help if I'm not a US citizen?
- \* Who in my household has to apply with me?
- \* Can I get help with an expense, which if not paid, may cause me to lose my job?



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## Read the booklets

- \* BOOK 3 – LDSS 4148 - **Red Book**
- \* What you should know if you have an emergency:
  - ✦ **Questions and Answer**
  - \* What is an emergency?
  - \* What if I'm homeless?
  - \* What if I have an emergency heating or utility need?
  - \* What happens if my request for one time emergency help is denied?



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## What is Temporary Assistance?

- Cash Assistance – on going  
Rent, utilities and personal needs
- Emergency one time payments  
Diversion payments



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## APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications are date stamped when received
  - \* Eligibility Appointment given
- Upon receipt, every application is screened for:
  - \* Expedited SNAP benefits
  - \* Emergencies

If Emergency exists, client is seen same day by the ENU unit.



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## EMERGENCIES

- FOOD
- SHELTER
- FUEL/UTILITY
- MORTGAGE/TAX ARREARS
- HOUSE REPAIRS
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- All applicants are asked to complete a DV screening form.
  - \* Clients are **not** required to complete the screening form to be eligible for TA.
- Voluntary and Confidential
- DV Liaison: Assesses for services. They also issues waivers for TA requirements.

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## LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- Language Interpretations
  - \* Clients are shown a language card at the reception window asking them to identify their language.
  - \* Phone Interpretation is available for over 200 languages
- Interpretation for the Deaf
- Literacy - staff available to assist



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## LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- TA Applications (LDSS 2921) are available in 8 different languages at all centers:
- SNAP applications (LDSS 4826) are also available at each center in 7 different languages:

- \* English
- \* Arabic
- \* Chinese
- \* Haitian-Creole
- \* Italian
- \* Korean
- \* Russian
- \* Spanish

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- \* Spanish

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## LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- Mybenefits.ny.gov on line is now available in 8 different languages:

- \* English
- \* Arabic
- \* Chinese
- \* Haitian-Creole
- \* Italian
- \* Korean
- \* Russian
- \* Spanish




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## SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION

- To ensure your documents get to your worker, please be sure to:
  - \* Write case name and case number on the paper work being submitted.



- Without this information, it becomes very time consuming trying to figure out what unit the paperwork belongs to.

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## SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION

- Never mail or drop off originals- we will make copies in the Center
- Clients can obtain a receipt for copies dropped off at DSS Center
- Attach a copy of the pend letter (LDSS 2642) to the requested documentation.



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## ELIGIBILITY INTERVIEW

- Appointments can be re-scheduled prior to the appointment date or on the same day by placing a phone call to the Eligibility Unit.
- Applicants are pended for documentation needed to determine eligibility.
  - \* Usually more time can be allowed with a request.
- TA Processing Time Frames:
  - \* 30 days for FA cases
  - \* 45 days for SN cases



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## TIME FRAMES

- Appointment within 7 business days
- **FA:** Benefits are effective from date all required documentation is received or the 30<sup>th</sup> day, whichever is earlier.
- **SN:** Benefits are effective **45 days** from application date or when all required documentation is received, whichever is later (emergency assistance can be issued in the interim).



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## DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- ID
- HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION
- ALIEN/CITIZENSHIP STATUS
- INCOME
- RESOURCES
- SHELTER COSTS



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## Document Requirement Form

- The “pend letter”
- The Document Requirement Sheet - LDSS 2642
- Lists everything needed to get a case open
- Distinguishes between TA and SNAP program
- Lists acceptable verification for each TA/SNAP requirement
  - \* This document is an important part of the case record and is used as a guide for the examiner in the interview process.
  - \* Clients should understand what we are asking them to bring in for verification and why. If they don't understand something, they should ask to have it explained.



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## Temporary Assistance

- Income eligibility:
  - \* 1<sup>st</sup> – Gross income can not exceed 185% of FPL
    - + FPL depends on size of family (See chart on next slide)
  - \* 2<sup>nd</sup> – Countable income can not exceed standard of need. Standard of need is set by NYS dependent upon household size. (chart)
- Resources
  - \* Liquid and Non-liquid: \$2000 per household or \$3000 if household has a member over age 60
    - + Vehicles - \$4650.00 may increase to \$9300.00 if vehicle is used for employment

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## Federal Poverty Levels - FPL

Size of Family Unit	Federal Poverty Guideline 100%		125% Federal Poverty Guideline ESN**		130% Federal Poverty Guideline Maximum Gross Monthly Income (SNAP Six-Month Reporters)		200% Federal Poverty Guideline EAP***	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
1	\$11,670	\$ 973	\$14,587.50	\$1,216.00	\$15,180	\$1,265	\$23,340	\$1,945
2	\$15,730	\$1,311	\$19,662.50	\$1,639.00	\$20,460	\$1,705	\$31,460	\$2,622
3	\$19,790	\$1,649	\$24,737.50	\$2,061.00	\$25,728	\$2,144	\$39,580	\$3,298
4	\$23,850	\$1,988	\$29,812.50	\$2,484.00	\$31,008	\$2,584	\$47,700	\$3,975
5	\$27,910	\$2,326	\$34,887.50	\$2,907.00	\$36,288	\$3,024	\$55,820	\$4,652
6	\$31,970	\$2,664	\$39,962.50	\$3,330.00	\$41,568	\$3,464	\$63,940	\$5,328
7	\$36,030	\$3,003	\$45,037.50	\$3,753.00	\$46,848	\$3,904	\$72,060	\$6,005
8	\$40,090	\$3,341	\$50,112.50	\$4,176.00	\$52,128	\$4,344	\$80,180	\$6,682
Each Additional +	\$ 4,060	\$ 338	\$ 5,075.00	\$ 423.00	\$ 5,280	\$ 440	\$ 8,120	\$ 677

## Monthly Standard of Need Chart

Number in Case	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Each Add'l Add
Basic	\$158.00	\$252.00	\$336.00	\$433.00	\$534.00	\$637.00	\$762.00	\$787.00	\$85.00
Energy	\$14.10	\$22.50	\$30.00	\$38.70	\$47.70	\$55.20	\$62.70	\$70.00	\$7.50
Suppl.	\$11.00	\$17.00	\$23.00	\$30.00	\$37.00	\$42.00	\$47.00	\$52.00	\$5.00
Shelter With Children*	\$310.00	\$358.00	\$447.00	\$503.00	\$560.00	\$586.00	\$611.00	\$611.00	*
Shelter Without Children	\$309.00	\$358.00	\$412.00	\$449.00	\$486.00	\$503.00	\$523.00	\$571.00	
Heat Allowance, #									Medically verified pregnancy allows "With Children" standards
Fuel oil	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$73.00	\$77.00	\$82.00	\$88.00	\$93.00	
Electric heat	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$94.00	\$99.00	\$106.00	\$113.00	\$120.00	
Other heat	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$58.00	\$61.00	\$65.00	\$69.00	\$74.00	
Max. Grant With Children, ***									Presence of child in HH allows "with Children Standards"
Heat Included	\$493.00	\$649.00	\$836.00	\$1004.00	\$1,178.00	\$1,308.00	\$1,422.00	\$1,528.00	Increase in HH count when child is born.
Oil heat	\$563.00	\$739.00	\$966.00	\$1077.00	\$1,255.00	\$1,382.00	\$1,518.00	\$1,613.00	
Electric heat	\$583.00	\$739.00	\$926.00	\$1096.00	\$1,277.00	\$1,406.00	\$1,535.00	\$1,640.00	
Other heat	\$549.00	\$705.00	\$892.00	\$1062.00	\$1,239.00	\$1,365.00	\$1,491.00	\$1,594.00	
Max. Grant W/O Children***									Child must be under 18 or under 19 & a full time student.
Heat Included	\$492.00	\$649.00	\$881.00	\$950.00	\$1,104.00	\$1,217.00	\$1,334.00	\$1,482.00	
Oil heat	\$562.00	\$739.00	\$871.00	\$1023.00	\$1,181.00	\$1,299.00	\$1,422.00	\$1,575.00	
Electric heat	\$582.00	\$739.00	\$891.00	\$1044.00	\$1,203.00	\$1,323.00	\$1,447.00	\$1,602.00	
Other heat	\$548.00	\$705.00	\$857.00	\$1008.00	\$1,165.00	\$1,282.00	\$1,403.00	\$1,558.00	
Room and Board Allowances									
Shelter Code 04 (all based on W/O children shelter standard)									
Personal Allowance	\$45.00	\$90.00	\$135.00	\$180.00	\$225.00	\$270.00	\$315.00	\$360.00	
Maximum Payment to Landlord	\$452.00	\$649.00	\$881.00	\$950.00	\$1,104.00	\$1,217.00	\$1,334.00	\$1,482.00	
Maximum Grant Total	\$537.00	\$739.00	\$936.00	\$1,130.00	\$1,329.00	\$1,487.00	\$1,649.00	\$1,842.00	

## SAMPLE BUDGET-FAMILY OF 4

- Basic allowance      \$433.00
- Energy      38.70
  - Energy Supplement      30.00
  - Shelter (w/children)      503.00
  - Heat (oil)      73.00
- Total Needs      \$1,077.70



## EARNED INCOME

- FA households, SN families (FA households that reached time limits) and SN pregnant women are eligible to receive these deductions from their budgeted gross earned income:
  - \* \$90 income exclusion, *plus*
  - \* 49% earned income disregard (changes every June)
- \* SN households (single and childless couples) receive:
  - \* \$90 income exclusion

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## EXEMPT INCOME

- Education grants and loans
- Adoption subsidies
- Foster Care payments
- First \$60 of room & board income
- SNAP and WIC
- Energy Assistance payments
- EITC
- HEAP



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## SHELTER SUPPLEMENT PLAN

- Under regulation, 352.3(a)(3) districts can request approval to operate a shelter supplement program
- Suffolk County has developed a local plan which can supplement shelter costs



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## EMPLOYABILITY UNIT

- Conducts initial Employability Interview for every TA applicant.
- Refers applicants for evaluations and/or treatment as appropriate:
  - \* Medical
  - \* Psychiatric
  - \* Alcohol and/or Substance abuse



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## DCAP

### Disabled Client Assistance Program

An advocacy unit for the disabled Temporary Assistance population in Suffolk County.



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## DCAP

### SSI BENEFIT LEVELS

- Individual living alone = \$808
- Individual living with others = \$744



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## SANCTIONS

- A sanction is imposed on an individual when there is a failure to comply with program requirements.
  - \* There is a process to show cause
- Sanctions carry financial and durational consequences.
- For active cases, the Fair Hearings # to request Aid To Continue is 1-800-342-3334



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## SNAP Program

- YES
  - \* FOOD PRODUCTS
- NO
  - \* ALCOHOL
  - \* MEDICINES
  - \* NON-FOOD ITEMS



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## Expedited SNAP Processing

Once a household is found eligible for expedited processing, we must provide an interview within 5 days.



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## Expedited SNAP

- Once a household is found eligible for expedited processing, we interview to determine if:
  - \* more information is needed, based on the fact the household has received Exp SNAP benefits in the past.....or
  - \* if nothing else is needed, we must issue benefits and make them available within 5 calendar days

## MAXIMUM INCOME FOR HH'S NOT CONTAINING AN ELDERLY/DISABLED MEMBER

HH SIZE	GROSS MONTHLY INCOME
1	\$1,265
2	\$1,705
3	\$2,144
4	\$2,584
5	\$3,024

## RECERTIFICATION

All SNAP recertification interviews are now done by telephone unless there is no telephone contact information provided.



## NYSNIP

### New York State Nutrition Improvement Project

- Automatically generates a SNAP case when a single SSI Live Alone is approved for SSI benefits.

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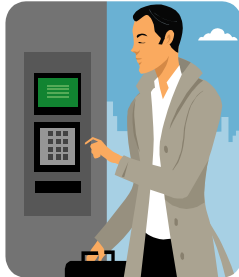
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## HOW TO ACCESS

**CASH**  
**MEDICAID**  
**SNAP**



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## CBIC IS A DEBIT CARD

- Amounts are debited from each account.
- Unused portions from each month can be carried over to the next month.
- Requires a PIN number
  - \* Chosen by client @ Ctr or
  - \* Via telephone



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## AVAILABILITY OF BENEFITS

- Recurring TA benefits are issued semi-monthly
- Issuance based on the last digit of the case number
  - \* EX: If case number ends with a 9, the client's benefits are available on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of the month



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## Unused BENEFITS

### SNAP

- Expunged after 365 days

### Cash Benefits

- If account not accessed for 90 days
- Cash benefits that are not fully withdrawn within 180 days go back to the State

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## HEAP Program

- Seasonal
  - \* 2014/2015 HEAP season is scheduled to begin November 2014 and end in March 2015
  - \* Any heating or utility emergencies outside of the HEAP season are handled via Temporary Assistance program.
    - \* Application must be made in person at your local center to determine eligibility
- TA and SNAP recipients are categorically eligible
- It is one benefit to assist with Home Heating Costs
- It is a Federal program, administered by the State
- Program rules are flexible and change from year to year

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## Tips For the Advocate

- Plan for transportation for follow up appointments in advance. A missed appointment can result in a denial or a sanction.
- Inform DSS examiner prior to a client moving, failure to do so may result in case closing.
- Help keep the client organized. Keep important documents and appointments in a folder.
- Go over the “pend letter” with the examiner when your client signs for it. Gather documents needed for eligibility as soon as possible.

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